

ascended the throne, and Wells wrote more than half of his books after Edward died, both men representing that point of intersection between Victorian and Modern, and both express in their lives and works the preoccupation of that time; like the Webbs and Galsworthy and Forster, they carried the advanced ideas of the late-Victorian reformers into the twentieth century, and watched them grow out-of-date and useless there. *Polytechnic* because they believed that man could seize knowledge in a wide embrace, and that through much knowing he could affect the future of his species, and earn a place in the story. Both were humanists in the most generous and impressive sense, engaging themselves in human affairs as agents rather than as critics. They suffered, to use Shaw's term, from *Bellevue's syndrome*—a rage to better the world.

Since their medium was the written word, they were both polemicists in everything they wrote. There is no trite distinction to be made between Shaw's prefaces and his plays, or between the Wells of *Tono-Bangay* and the Wells of *The Open Conspiracy*—all are polemical, for if one aspires to turn words into actions, then all words are equally instrumental. (This is what Virginia Woolf found so unsatisfactory in Wells's novels: "in order to complete their intent, necessary to do something—in join a society, or more desperately, to write a cheque". Mrs. Woolf did not include Shaw among her last Edwardian examples, but she might have—he was as guilty of what she condemned as Wells was.)

The effect of polemical intentions on judgment is nicely illustrated in the relations between Shaw and Wells and Henry James. Both men quarrelled with James, and neither understood what he was getting at. Shaw, writing to explain why the Incorporated Stage Society was rejecting a James play, said:

I, as a socialist, have had to preach, as much as anyone, the enormous power of the environment as a dead destiny. We can change it: we must change it: there is absolutely no other sense in life than the work of changing it.

and he urged James to forsake art and join with the forces of change. And Wells, though admired by James, cruelly attacked him in *Howards End*, and later, mulling over his relations with the Master, concluded that James "had no idea of the possible use of the novel as a help to conduct". To which James would no doubt have replied that Wells had no idea that the novel might nobly exist without uses.

It might be argued—and indeed it has been argued—that in both men

the polemicist eventually dominated the artist. One could find considerable evidence for this view in their later writings, and especially in those vast works of the 1920s, *Back to Methuselah* and *The World of William Child*—two distended, ill-constructed, undramatic monsters over which Creative Evolution and The Open Conspiracy have spread like some dreadful Wellian plague, and have left imagination quite dead.

But even in such cases, the canons of aesthetics seem inadequate bases for condemnation. "You cannot be an artist", Shaw wrote in an early letter, "until you have contracted yourself with the limits of your art." Neither he nor Wells found that contraction easy, and it is a necessary condition of just judgment of either writer that the critic realize that the limits of the art cannot be held. One must see Wells, not as a spoiled Dickens, but *sub generis*, as a complete Wells; and similarly with Shaw. The coordinates of art are too strict to contain them, and are too simply that *Back to Methuselah* is a bad play, or *William Child* a bad novel, is to have missed the point. However, as aesthetics of polemics is what is called for.

On the other hand, one must not let a preoccupation with polemical concerns blind one to essential excellences in both writers. There must be many readers of Shaw who first discovered that discursive prose could be pleasurable by reading his prefaces, and who learnt there the meaning of style. And though no one is likely to miss the fact that Shaw was a gifted comic dramatist, it is worth noting that he was at least as good in comic narrative: "The Life and Death of Uncle William", for example, in Shaw's preface to *Humankind* is as good as Sterne. And in Wells, behind and below the myths of science and the satirical grotesques of society, lies a gift for particularizing ordinariness and imagining new actualities that makes the comparison with Dickens legitimate.

The polemical road may lead to fame—artists don't visit Stalin, but polemicists do, and both Shaw and Wells did—but it also leads to disappointment. These two men had set out to change the world, and how far they succeeded? Shaw had played his part in the Fabian Society, and had lived to see the Labour Party governing England; but how many of the words he wrote had touched that change? And did he admire what socialism had come to? Wells had imposed his views of history on more people than any other historian ever reached, and by writing frankly about sex, and frankly living his convictions, he had

contributed to the sexual revolution in this century; but these were not the achievements he had imagined.

No, in spite of their endeavours, mankind remained unreformed. "Man is so far a failure as a political animal", Shaw observed, and Wells, in a novella of the 1930s, has a psychiatrist darkly conclude:

Man is still what he was. Inevitably bestial, envious, malicious, greedy. Man, Sir, unmasked and disillusioned, is the same fearful, snarling, lightning beast he was a hundred thousand years ago. These are no metaphors, Sir. What I tell you is the monstrous reality.

It was as though *The Island of Doctor Moreau* had come true.

One must conclude that both men lived too long. They belonged to the Edwardian era, when optimism was still possible, and they lived to see the failure of their hopes. "I have produced no permanent impression", Shaw once said, "because nobody has ever believed me"; and almost nobody ever did. And Wells said sadly, near the end of his life, that he was tired of talking in parables in a world engaged in destroying itself.

But if both had a sense of ultimate failure, they expressed it very differently, and the difference points to a fundamental difference of temperament. Compare, for example, the epiphany that they imagined for themselves. Shaw's was to be

He Jacet
BERNARD SHAW
Who the devil was he?

while Wells proposed for his own, "God damn you all, I told you so".

There was a cosmic indifference in Shaw that made it possible for him to contemplate being forgotten, and even to provide for that eventually in his will. It was not coldness though careless men mistook it for that; for Shaw had, but not a warm heart, then a warm intellect; it was, rather, an abnormal tolerance for reality. Wells didn't have it—the actual made him furious perhaps one does not invent futures unless the present is intolerable, and he spent his life—both his public life and his private one—in trying to exchange new worlds for old. And it was Wells who came in the end to despair: his last book, *Mind at the End of Its Tether*, is a cry of anguish and pain, like that last Martian howling alone on Primrose Hill in *The War of the Worlds*. Whereas Shaw, like one of his Ancients, waited for death with at most a slight irritation that it was so long in coming.

If Shaw and Wells, viewed as artists, rank below the very greatest, this is partly because they refused to

be merely artists, and partly because they nevertheless invite comparison with the best: Shaw is one of the Great Irishmen, and shares the ambience of Joyce and Yeats, and Wells's novels are in the greatest English tradition; if neither is at the top, yet both are in honoured company. Shaw himself said: "Either I shall be remembered as a playwright as long as Aristophanes and Molière, or I shall be a forgotten clown before the end of the century." But there is a third possibility: to be remembered as a man who was great in the multifariousness of his imagination, and who realized his greatness in the amplitude of his work. Writing of Charles Doughty, Shaw remarked that "there must have been something majestic or gigantic about the man that made him classic in himself". Perhaps that is the best way to treat Shaw and Wells, as giants who were classics in themselves. Few men of letters have lived so fully engaged lives in the world, and put that fullness into their work, so that here one can rightly say that the work is the man. The truest and most useful judgment of either will be that which encompasses the life and the work together, as one record of a great imagination.

Of the four books under review, only one fully meets that standard. Lovat Dickson's *H. G. Wells* is a true and sensitive account of Wells's life, written with elegance and generosity. Mr. Dickson has made use of the Wells-Macmillan files, to which his position as a publisher has given him special access, and though this gives the firm of Macmillan a somewhat inflated role in the narrative, it provides valuable social history and one would not wish the account abridged. Admirers of Wells may feel that Mr. Dickson has been too severe in some of his judgments—that Wells was a man "who did not know what intellectual rigour was", and who was inherently incapable of clear, rational thinking, but that, on the other hand, "he was all brains and very little heart"—and not everyone will share his quirky admiring (for *The Uprising Fire*, for example), but these are the marks of a clear and individual critical intelligence at work, and the book is a fine and permanent addition to Wells criticism and biography.

If the principles sketched above for judging Wells have any validity, then it should follow that a book titled *Structure in Four Novels by H. G. Wells* will not be adequate to its subject. And that is indeed the case. Mr. Newell discusses a "numerate of abstract thinking" in *Lure and Mr. Lewisham*, *Kippis*, *Tono-Bangay*, and *The History of Mr. Polly*, but his method demonstrates nothing so clearly as that it is the wrong method; he has sealed off

the books from Wells and his friends and has made them seem less serious and alive than they are. The novels have never had the attention that Wells's science fiction has, and it is good to see what may be a critical shift of interest.

It is difficult to write objectively about a book that is at once both pretensions, but the following may be made quite objectively of Mr. Colin Wilson's *Bernard Shaw*. That it is careless in its details, wrong-headed in its critical judgments, confused in its style, and clumsy and humdrum in its subject of the book was not rational, witty and stylish in anything he did, then the offence committed by Mr. Wilson seems undeniable. His "reassessment" does not seem to be based on any materials, though without any bibliography, and with only a few uncertain footnotes for guidance one cannot be sure. His own appearance to be standard published sources, and though this is a perfectly reasonable way of going about a reassessment of a major writer, it puts a burden on the author of whatever is new in his book, and these terms Mr. Wilson would hardly have taken Shaw to be a *Utopian* philosopher in the School of Wilson, and so turns a writer of unpredictable genius into a mere messiah of Creative Evolution. He caps his performance with a chapter entitled "My own personal view of the matter", in which he explains his sketch of his own philosophical and literary views, and though he has affection for Shaw he does not skip this chapter; or better still, the whole book.

There is no reason to skip Chappelow's *Shaw* "The Shaw Out" except its enormous size. Like Mr. Chappelow's earlier *The Village*, this book is a collection of biographical materials and opinions, often trivial but, because the source is Shaw, usually interesting—for instance, the text of Shaw's printed postcards, and the various versions of his will. It is a book of the convinced Shawian, by a convinced Shawian; copious scholarship is evident in its evocation of Shaw, but accurate and useful would have been.

No doubt he would also agree of the definitive edition of his works which the Bodley Head has announced. The edition, in seven volumes, will contain all the two of the plays Shaw included in his official canon, the preface, index of characters and of other material. Volume one, containing "Plays Pleasant" and "Plays Pleasant", is promised for 1970.

POLITICS

Cromwellian rhetoric

PAUL FOOT: *The Rise of Enoch Powell*. 143pp. Cornmarket. 30s. Penguin. 4s.

Human relations are perhaps best when they are least discussed, because when they are discussed, they are taken for granted. By this standard, race relations in Britain are now very bad and getting continuously worse. The blame does not, of course, lie exclusively with Mr. Enoch Powell, as he himself is undoubtedly a most intelligent man, who cannot be supposed to have acted without deliberation, the questions arise, what were his motives and intention? Mr. Paul Foot has no hesitation about giving the answers: his principal motive was opportunism and his intention was to capture the leadership of the Conservative Party.

Mr. Foot's diagnosis is correct, and it seems that Mr. Powell has made a great error of judgment. It is hardly conceivable now that he could ever lead the Conservative Party as at present constituted. The way he could achieve—and that only if the Conservatives were to merge with the Liberals in the next General Election—would be to split the party and lead a stable group of it. Even that is unlikely, because there are not many Conservatives who would agree with Mr. Powell on the whole range of controversial issues which he has aired up in recent years. Many of his ideas, for instance, when shared by his own immigration have simply failed to study or understand his ideas on other favourite topics, such as defence, foreign policy, economics and capital punishment. Mr. Foot is surely right, nevertheless, in arguing that his first open attempt to seize party leadership at the internal election in 1965 was seriously injured even if futile. There is therefore at least a prima facie case for the argument that Mr. Powell was subsequently engaged in a search for a theme which would set the countenances alight and identify him as its champion. He found the theme in immigration and race relations.

To prove the charge of opportunism Mr. Foot has carried out a prodigious amount of research. He has studied not only the national and local press but also the local press in many interesting persons, and has gathered up other material. To be exact in this quest has meant not turning up the positive evidence which Mr. Powell has said and

done but also identifying the occasions when he said and did nothing. For it is Mr. Foot's contention that in this field of controversy—much later than other parliamentarians, such as Sir Cyril Osborne, and later than the editor of the *Wolverhampton Express* and *Star*, the local newspaper in his own constituency. It must be admitted that not all such evidence is silent; for example, for remarks by a local M.P., even on themes in which the press itself reports to be deeply interested. Still, there can be no doubt that Mr. Foot makes out a strong case.

The story begins in India at the end of the Second World War, with Mr. Powell dedicating himself to the preservation of the British Empire. It traces his gradual, painful acceptance of the dissolution of the Empire, followed by his growing distaste for the Commonwealth. The watershed came acknowledged in 1960, when he changed "without disapproval, and in 1964, when he wrote anonymously that "the Commonwealth is a gigantic farce". His earliest reference to 1956, and follow what was then the orthodox line: he was against any limitation, for which he declared that "very few people would say the time had yet come". Mr. Foot rightly notes the verbal ambiguity about his own position, but he surely could not have been understood as including himself at that time among the "very few". As for racial discrimination, in 1964 Mr. Powell still declared that he would set his face "like flint against making any difference between one citizen of this country and another on grounds of his origin". With this statement Mr. Foot contrasts words uttered in 1967: to deny that "there is any difference between those who belong to this country and those others was to deny 'an undeniable truth'".

In fact there is no formal inconsistency between the last two quotations. "Making any difference" clearly means treating people differently, which is not the same as recognizing that they are different. (Shakespeare made the same point in another context: "Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds".) The point is not without significance, because Mr. Powell uses language with scrupulous care, and it is by minute examination of his phraseology that Mr. Foot seeks to convict him. The gravamen of his charge is not simply that Mr. Powell became interested in race and

immigration solely because he thought they would win votes, but also, that every time his rhetoric forced the leaders of his party to shift their ground in his direction, he raised his own bid. First there must be control; then there must be tighter control; then dependants must be excluded; finally there must be repatriation. Moreover, greater and greater urgency must be injected into the debate, if only because in the long run it becomes meaningless to talk of "repatriating" those born in this country. Not without some justification, Mr. Foot argues that even Mr. Heath's statements on immigration have grown firmer as Mr. Powell's have grown more strident and far-reaching.

Mr. Foot's work is impressive, passionate, and almost, but not quite, convincing. It hangs together, rather like a work of historical detection, but somehow it is inconclusive: as if it were to be argued that Oliver Cromwell—a character very like Mr. Powell—decided on the execution of Charles I in order to court popularity. There is in fact only one man who can say whether Mr. Foot has got his answers right—indeed, only one man entirely competent to review this book at all—and that is Mr. Powell. If he were to do so, he would have to find a number of flaws in it; but they too would probably be inconclusive.

Mr. Foot is often hasty and careless in presenting and interpreting evidence. For example, he reproduces a table which, he says, "shows that in every area of social welfare the cost per head is higher for the total population than it is for the immigrant population". A mere glance at the table refutes the claim: of the three headings in it, under one education and child care the table shows exactly the reverse. Mr. Foot is also unreliable about the 1957 Rent Act and its consequences, for which he blames Mr. Powell personally. He fails to see that it was rent restriction, not its absence, that made Reichman possible; and he flatly declares that the incoming Labour Government "promptly repealed" the Act, which is simply untrue.

There are other cases in which his animosity against capitalism and the Conservative Party carries him into error. Mr. Powell would not find it difficult to pick them out. But the errors do not by themselves invalidate Mr. Foot's general thesis that Mr. Powell is an opportunist and not a man of principle. Only Mr. Powell can do that; and although the challenge is formidable, the task cannot yet be described as impossible.

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Bavarian oratory

JOSEF STRAUSS: *Challenges and Responses*. Translated by Harry R. 176pp. Waldenland and Nook. 30s.

Strauss is one of the most influential figures to present-day German politics, an impression which he does little to dispel and the present book merely helps to reinforce. He is a man of considerable intellect and formal education who dissociates himself deeply from "intellectuals". The apparatus in *Challenges and Responses*, ranging from Franz Schlegel to George Ball, may, in fact, be his research assistant, but he does not appear out of place in it. Ever since he became Minister of Atomic Affairs in 1955, Strauss has been closely associated with the economically most sophisticated of German industry and is the extent of his power-base in rustic Bavaria, he publicly identifies himself with those sectors of opinion which are sympathetic with the twentieth century. It is significant that in the Bundestag election his party was in some cases improved, its rural constituencies, while

losing heavily in the metropolitan areas of Munich and Nuremberg.

He is a staunch Bavarian patriot, and an evident enthusiast for Europe, but the one thing he is not interested in—as the book makes plain—is a revived German nationalism. Yet his stump oratory is full of nationalistic overtones—designed to appeal to just the sentiments he claims to regard as superseded—and the ranks of the Christian Social Union are filled with sometimes highly dubious ex-Sudeten agitators; though it is obvious he cares no more for the "lost territories" than did Adenauer, and for much the same reason. Nothing illustrates his dilemma—that of the statesman nursing his hillbilly constituency—better than the crisis over the revocation of the Deutschmark. He resisted this step, which was self-evidently in the interests of European economic stability, in deference to Poundist objections and in the vocabulary of outraged national dignity.

However, his hillbills do not read books, and it is to his other constituency, that of the technocrats, that *Challenges and Responses* is evidently addressed. Strauss's concern with the political and strategic independence

of Europe, based on distrust of America and fear of Russia, has given rise to his reputation as "Gaullist", though he certainly is not Gaullist either on the question of European supra-nationalism or on Britain's role in it. But "Gaullism" does illuminate his view of the Far East. The Yellow Peril is a paper dragon; and so far as it is not, it should be harnessed to give the Russians nightmares. There is even a sly hint of a Bonn-Peking axis as the counterweight to a new equilibrium.

Where Herr Strauss is, to put it mildly, unperceptive is in his assessment of Russian policy. Because the Soviet version of détente has strings attached, that does not mean it is hypocritical to pretend; and while the invasion of Czechoslovakia demonstrates Soviet ruthlessness, it is less convincing as proof of Soviet expansionism. This differentiated hostility to Russia is all the more surprising to the light of his utopian view of a united Europe which would ultimately include what he calls the "cordon Stalpaire".

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From ideology to sociology

PIERRE SORLIN: *The Soviet People and Their Society*. Translated by Daniel Weissbart. 290pp. Pail Mail Press. £2.10s.

G. V. OSIPOV (Editor): *Town, Country and People*. 260pp. Tavistock. £2.15s.

Popularization which avoids the pitfalls of propaganda and of sensationalism is an art in which French writers easily surpass their British and American colleagues; and a good reason for translating M. Sorlin's book is that no comparable work in English exists on this level. He makes no pretence of writing history, but has set out to trace in historical perspective what has made Soviet society as it is today. It is addressed to that somewhat uncertain entity, the general reader. For the specialist or the advanced student, M. Sorlin skips over too many points; and, while a bibliography of modest dimensions is provided, there are no references, so that possibly rash statements cannot be traced back to their source and illuminating. Praise accorded to Russian achievements is given ungrudgingly; and the severest criticism avoids the impression of a desire to score points.

Speaking of the question of wages, M. Sorlin remarks that "every comparison with the West automatically distorts the picture—positively or negatively, depending on the observer's viewpoint". The remark has a wider application. The book takes the Soviet Union, so to speak, on its own terms, and does not attempt to put its policies, its institutions, or its people, for good or evil, against their western counterparts. Many features can be singled out in which Russian society resembles that of the West: the bureaucracy is self-perpetuating. A few workers' sons move into this category if they are gifted. All officials' children find places in offices, however modest they may be. In spite of all the government's attempts to reverse this trend, people who are not manual workers enjoy greater prestige than those who are, and they support one another in order not to lose this status.

By and large, however, conditions are too different to make comparisons fruitful. M. Sorlin stresses the immense mobility of the Soviet population over the past fifty years, the

spread of education, the desire to learn, the belief in the possibilities of improvement, and the paradoxical attitude to authority—cynical yet submissive—which made it possible for an admiration of Stalin to survive even in the period of his worst atrocities.

A book of this kind inevitably contains a few mistakes, and many oversimplified statements which require qualification. It may be literally true that "the government bureaucracy played a much more effective role than most party members". But, if this implies that the government machine was more powerful than the party machine, it is wholly false. The treatment is also rather uneven. M. Sorlin is excellent on changes and movements of population; and he makes a good job at the difficult task of unravelling the different strands which make up the fabric of Soviet society. He is perfunctory on the collectivization of agriculture, and seems to overestimate the very small success enjoyed by the policy of mobilizing poor peasants against kulaks. He has little—and nothing new—to say about the experiences of the Second World War, but is excellent on the process of recovery after it. In an undogmatic conclusion he notes, as others have done, the decay of ideology.

The Soviet people are delighted with their leaders' promises of substantial improvements in the years to come, but as consumers and not as communists that they experience these emotions. But the final note struck is one of the uncertainty of prediction. Soviet society "is unique and cannot be defined in terms of any other".

Mr. Osipov's book is the second in a series of "Studies in Soviet Society". It is reasonable to assume that one of the purposes of these publications in English is to demonstrate that sociology, once a banned subject in Russia, has made great strides since the foundation of a Soviet Sociological Association in 1953. This is indeed a welcome development, especially since Soviet sociology, on the showing of these volumes, seems predominantly pragmatic, less encumbered than western sociology with methodological theory and jargon, American or Marxist, and more closely geared to the problems of the economy.

The previous volume was devoted to industry and labour; the present one concentrates on problems of population and the countryside. The demographic studies are not very sophisticated, and revolve round familiar topics such as falling birth-rate and sharply falling mortality. Incidentally, it is surely not true to say that Malibians differ from Marxists by attributing population growth to biological laws. The law invoked by Malibius was economic in character, but was assumed to be universal, whereas Marx assumed population movements to be related to a particular economy. Some of the studies pursued by Soviet sociologists (and also by western sociologists) seem to be done for their own sake rather than for any significance that can be discovered in them, e.g., for how long, and in what conditions,

married couples have been acquainted with each other before marriage.

The most interesting and important papers are those dealing with rural life. These depict a rural society whose standards of living, social services and amenities, especially education and technical qualifications, have improved out of all recognition since the Second World War, but still lag, though no longer at an unapproachable distance, behind those of the towns. The studies all appear to relate to European Russia. Elsewhere the picture would be rather different, though the progress also remarkable. What one misses, however, is any serious attempt to distinguish and cope with abuses and hindrances to progress. One investigation of a district not

far from Moscow concludes:

Naturally the authors were not only deal with the complex problems of the district. They are not only the country as a whole. There are problems to be resolved in each district which are much in evidence in a district with its unfavourable soil and soil, and there is the lag of development of the village labour of the town in cultural matters. There are many other social problems.

Why not tell us something of these problems? It is not that wishes to discredit the immense progress that has been made, or to unduly on shortcomings. But the functions of the sociology surely to discover difficulties and obstacles as a first step towards mounting them. Here western sociology still enjoys a distinct advantage.

Satellites since Stalin

FRANÇOIS FEJTO: *Histoire des démocraties populaires*. Vol. 2: *Après Staline, 1953-1968*. 534pp. Paris: La Saull. 36fr.

François Fejtó, Hungarian-born and now a French citizen, has written a sequel to his history of the people's democracies in the Stalin era, which was published in 1952. The task of carrying on the story of the Eastern European countries from the death of Stalin to the present day has, for obvious reasons, proved far more tricky and more arduous. In the earlier period the eccentric figure of Tito, breathing out defiance of Moscow, and delicately balanced between East and West, did not seriously mar the unity of the picture. Throughout the other people's democracies, beneath every variation of economic status, political tradition, and incident, a single predominant pattern could be traced. By and large, Moscow called the tune, and it was everywhere the same tune.

The situation which M. Fejtó confronts in his second volume is one of almost infinite diversity, frustrating any attempt to present a clear and consistent pattern. It was China rather than Yugoslavia which made

irreparable the rent in the seamless garment of Marxism-Leninism; for the defection of China was a deadly blow to the power, as well as to the ideological prestige, of Russia. But Chinese influence in Eastern Europe has been insignificant, or at best indirect. As M. Fejtó points out, the Chinese revolution has made a far larger impact on the western than on the eastern communist parties. This may be partly because the West had far closer ties, territorial and commercial, with China, but partly also because Chinese relations with the people's democracies were all too plainly nothing more than the reverse side of Chinese relations with Russia. In 1956 Mao appeared to encourage the Polish champions of independence; in 1958 he applauded more loudly than anyone the execution of Nagy; ten years later China denounced with equal vehemence the invasion of Czechoslovakia. All this made very little sense in Eastern European terms.

M. Fejtó is right in seeing the revival of nationalism and the strength of national culture as a distinguishing mark of these years. But even this has its ambiguities and obscurities. How much of the old internationalist nationalism which bedevilled

Central and Eastern Europe in the wars still simmers beneath the surface, ready to burst forth. Russian pressures are renewed, difficult to guess. A question hangs even over the future of Yugoslavia after the death and withdrawal of Tito. The rapid and comprehensive spread of education throughout this area (as elsewhere) must have revolutionary consequences which can as yet be assessed.

Not, however, much book have loosened in the past few years, can the overwhelming and influence of the Russian's money be left for a moment out of calculation. M. Fejtó, writing immediately after last year's election in Czechoslovakia, concludes by saying at Moscow, and recording hope that "the next Dabak arise at the nerve-centre of the system". This, like much of the book, necessarily remains a speculation. But, for the moment, M. Fejtó has performed a valuable service in setting down as much information as is available of events, developments and people in the people's democracies since the death of Stalin. To expect a definitive study at this stage seems premature.

Between East and West

DAVID CHILDS: *East Germany*. 286pp. Ennsal Bann. £2.5s.

There is no uniform pattern in Benn's "Nations of the Modern World" series. Compared, for instance, with the elegant, historical sweep of Professor Michael Balfour's companion volume on West Germany, Dr. Childs has given us a rather pedestrian compendium of information. But then, the German Democratic Republic is that sort of state; like the mule it has neither pride of ancestry nor hope of posterity. It shares some of the mule's other qualities—obstinacy, hard work and a grey, unprepossessing exterior. But it is unquestionably "there", an empirical fact which it is now permissible to mention aloud even in the Federal Republic.

The D.D.R. is also a state about which there is a remarkable amount of legend and relatively little hard information, a situation which is partly the fault of the D.D.R. authorities who can never make up their minds whether or not they want foreigners to find out about them. To concentrating on fact—detailed and up-to-date, presented with scepticism but without prejudice—Dr. Childs has produced an indispensable work of reference.

The most remarkable aspect of the D.D.R.'s consolidation in the past few years has been economic progress. Its per-capita production is one and a half times that of the Soviet

Union, though still less than that of West Germany or, of course, the United States. Three-quarters of its foreign trade is with the Soviet bloc and the Third World—i.e., where it does Russia most good; but the very size of its contribution to the socialist camp's economy now gives it some leverage even with the Soviet Union; the days of colonial status are, it seems, over.

The way in which the economic reforms were carried out was typical of the D.D.R. Not until Liberman and Nemchinov had shown that some reliance on the price mechanism and on flexible programming were ideologically acceptable did the D.D.R. decide to adopt these devices. Once they did adopt them, they applied them with characteristic thoroughness and spectacular success. What many readers would have found illuminating is some comparison between the East German and Czech experiences of economic liberalization. Why did the Czechs think that political liberalization was a necessary condition of this development, while the East Germans managed without? The question is central to one of Dr. Childs's main theses: the rather confident prophecy that "such progress must mean in East Germany, as surely as in the Soviet Union, a democracy which is worthy of the economic, social and educational progress".

Political repression, probably aggravated but surely not caused by

Western non-recognition, represents the dark side of the regime. The little relaxation accompanied by growing prosperity was not after the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Indeed, it is arguable that the standards of living make the regime more bearable, just as the educational progress can, within limits, dispense with intellectual freedom. In the arts and the human sciences, however, the East German has made no real contribution, and its best years have either been purged (Gang Horeh, Robert Havemann) or have gone to the West (Ernst Bloch, Hans Mayer, Alfred Kerpel). Dr. Childs quotes Ingrid Ochsner, at one time one of the stars of the Distel ensemble: "As a doctor, a technician one can live fairly well in the D.D.R., as a writer or artist one has to prostitute oneself."

Dr. Childs succeeds in putting record straight on a number of important topics, giving credit where it is due. He rightly stresses whether the D.D.R. becomes a pleasant place to live in will depend partly on whether West Germany reverses its dogmatic policies of the Adenauer period. But the hopes which places in "the new, more reasonable, thoughtful, flexible and really competent young people" are unburdened by the "mistakes and antinomies of the past" must, in light of recent developments, remain hopes.

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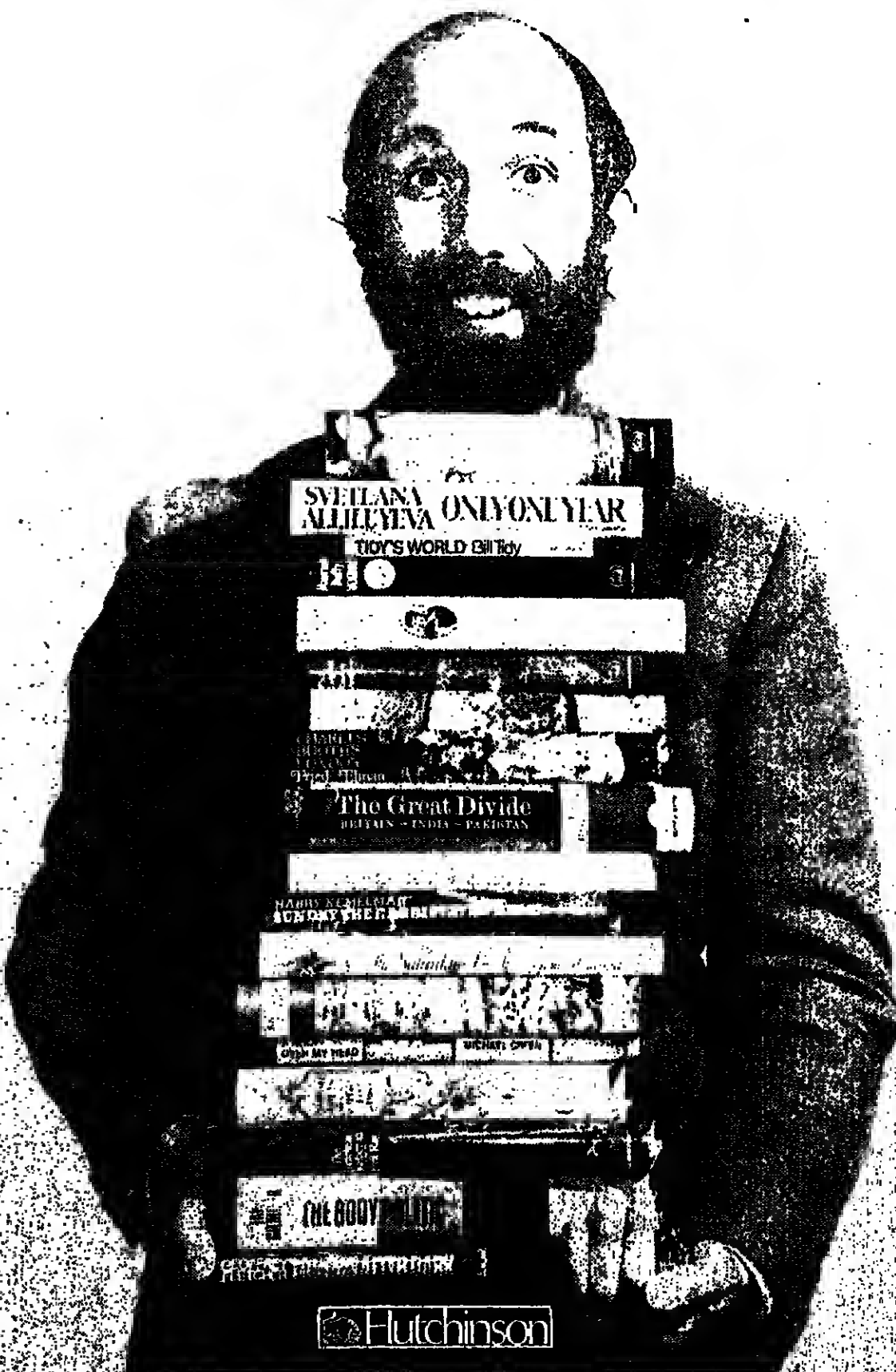
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John Hadfield

Rhythms and language patterns

GUIDO BALLO *The Critical Eye: A New Approach to Art Appreciation*. Translated by R. H. Boothroyd. 201pp. Heinemann, £4.45.
CHRISTOPHER FINCH *Pop Art*. 168pp. Studio Vista, 25s. (Penguin back, 12s. 6d.)
CHRISTOPHER FINCH *Image as Language. Aspects of British Art 1950-1988*. 166pp. Penguin, 10s.
JOHN RUSSELL AND SUZI GABLIK *Pop Art Redefined*. 240pp. Thames and Hudson, £2.2s.

Professor Ballo's "new approach in art appreciation". *The Critical Eye* is intended for the general reader and, what is more problematical, the art student. It has been well enough translated, though a number of passages read somewhat oddly in a British context. Witness the author's condemnation of the art snob (or "hearsay-monger"), who talks knowingly about "op, mech or cynic art"; "generally speaking", we are assured, he is a child of the "petite bourgeoisie", who has derived an inferiority complex from an upbringing "surrounded by tasteless things". Witness also the fulsome moment when Professor Ballo declares the *Opportunities* 22 to be a work of art "without any reservations": the stated criterion, that it combines utility with harmony, is understandably not applied throughout the rest of the book.

In spite of these occasional blemishes, Professor Ballo's main theme is consistent. It is, in effect, rather too consistent: for the lack of flexibility in his choice of guiding concepts has the effect of exposing a number of assumptions that are normally swept under the carpet in this type of criticism. When they are exposed, they cast considerable doubt upon the validity of "art appreciation" as Professor Ballo describes it. The point can be neatly, if a trifle unfairly, demonstrated by reference to a cryptic diagram which prefaces the chapter: "A Work of Art does not always look the same." Two photographs of the "Winged Victory of Samothrace" are juxtaposed, with variations in size, tone and definition that are supposed to indicate how "people of different periods saw it". (A totally black area of similar proportions is also included, presumably to indicate that for a substantial period people did not see the "Winged Victory" at all.) Whether Professor Ballo intends, so or not, this series of illustrations, applied under the thesis implicit in his title, that variations in attitudes towards, and knowledge of, a work of art can be equated with the readily perceptible and measurable

variations of physical phenomena. This disregard for the psychological, and physical, complexities of "appreciation" is complemented by a refusal to allow for similar complexities on the artist's side. "Style", writes Professor Ballo, "was always fundamentally a question of the artist's skill".

Such a formidable exercise in over-simplification might perhaps be justified if the general reader was in fact being supplied with tools that would serve him in a first acquaintance with the history of art. But this is not the case. There is a clear dichotomy between the simple categories which the reader is invited to use and the principles which form the basis of Professor Ballo's judgments. Although he ostensibly ignores the mystique of professional expertise, his critical reactions often seem to depend upon an intuitive faculty that exists upon an entirely different level from his declared criteria. For example, he gives pride of place to the concept of "rhythm", which is held to be the "most important" quality to be discerned in the work of art. In recognition that the concept is a very familiar one, he introduces the rather nebulous idea of a "real" or "hidden" rhythm which is in contrast to rhythms of a merely declaratory or over-assertive character. Yet he surely involves himself in a curious contradiction when he explains that the hidden rhythm is at once easy to identify and impossible to reproduce. "Any-one who is accustomed to seeing forgeries", he claims, can detect them because of their "lack of rhythm". But if this lack of rhythm is indeed so simple to detect, why does the forger "inevitably" give himself away? Can it be that Professor Ballo has in mind a whole series of subtly interconnected aesthetic factors, for which presence or absence of rhythm is a wholly inadequate description?

Perhaps Professor Ballo's failure is an inevitable result of the desire to evaluate works of art according to simple formal categories. Christopher Finch runs no such risk in his two short studies of recent art. In a section mainly devoted to Populism, he concludes that the "media landscape" can be more easily grasped in terms of "language patterns" than as a "material phenomenon". The spectator should approach such a work as a formal scheme in its own right, and as a code to be cracked. Indeed, he should be ready to "abandon his passive role and

engage in the sport as a participant". Mr. Finch has extended this approach in *Image as Language*, where the majority of works under discussion are presented as works to be "read"; they rely for their effect as much upon an informed scanning of the way different idioms are meshed together as upon direct retinal response.

Mr. Finch's implication that the medium term between artist and spectator is a semantic rather than a purely formal one requires no special justification. But it is a pity that he succumbs so completely to the attractions of what Lévi-Strauss has called the "Utopia of our Age": the desire to establish a system of signs upon a single level of articulation. When he discusses the work of R. B. Kitaj, Mr. Finch goes to extreme lengths to dispel any hint of an ulterior meaning beyond the "language pattern" of the work. With reference to that artist's enigmatic catalogue notes, he reports: "Kitaj is amused that they have been taken so seriously. And in case we should be under the illusion that Kitaj's work bears any relation to anything, let alone their catalogue notes, he remarks with scorn:

Some observers have been tempted to look for meanings in his work; meanings such as might be found in a (tear) on venereal diseases, their variety and incidence amongst the floating population of Darwin.

On a pewter salver

RONALD F. MICHAELIS *British Pewter*. 98pp. Ward Lock, 25s.

Among the status symbols of the past an oak cupboard, loaded with as many silver vessels as one's income or one's wife's dowry could afford, was important. Lesser folk had to make do with a lesser metal. That metal was pewter, an alloy of copper and tin, the proportions of which for that objects such as dishes were laid down in 1348 as 26lb. of copper to every hundredweight of tin, while for rounded pots lead could be added. Later, about 1600, a further alloy was authorized roughly half way between these two—11lb. of copper and 13lb. of lead to each hundredweight of tin.

All this, and a great deal more, is explained in this excellent little book by Ronald Michaelis, upon whom has descended the mummies of those earlier pewter experts Howard Cotterell and H. J. Massé. Clearly anyone who could afford silver, would buy silver—the pewterers,

What disreputable company they keep, in Mr. Finch's view, these futile addicts of meaning!

It would be wrong to conclude, however, that Mr. Finch is oblivious to anything but the autonomous "language-game". It is a danger of his approach that all artists should appear to exist on the same level, each secure within the limits of his own vocabulary. Not is this danger wholly averted in *Image as Language*, where the uneven quality of the painters under discussion is hardly brought out to any degree. All the same, Mr. Finch insists in his introduction that "two or three" of them have "delined for themselves areas of language... which have become second nature and can serve as a basis for an original exploration of pure plastic relationships". He continues:

The character of these relationships is defined by the linguistic structure of the painting and thus takes on the appearance of inevitability which is one of the marks of major art.

It is this quality of "inevitability" which ultimately rescues criticism on a linguistic level, at the price of reintroducing the question of meaning. For the fact that one "language pattern" among many other conceivable patterns appears "inevitable" cannot be explained solely in terms of the articulated code. How then can it

be explained? Statements by a number of American artists, as Russell and Suzi Gablik's *Pop Art Redefined* give at least some indication, up to a point that is yet another book in which more or less leading artists are summoned to around the standard of an original movement. The authors, the strong impression, as given in the recent exhibition of Pop Art, link between the various movements, artists, Suzi Gablik even claims: "Pop began in America as a phenomenon barely distinguishable from the environment and its random events". Yet there is a number of valuable statements which confuse this misconception. Le Gage's brilliant piece on Le Johns, which advised us to look "structures, not subjects", is not standstillly absent. So is his sister, Rauschenberg, which would lead us to verify that Suzi Gablik's "painting relates as much to what it does to art" is a misrepresentation of that artist's subtle and pungent remark. However, there is a Rosenquist, insisting that his "subject-matter isn't popular art" and in Rosenquist's elaboration of his "basic meaning" of his "We begin to recognize his popular pattern of linguistic elements acquired the 'inevitability' of art.

Jamie Steede, heir to the Steede bank, talk with increasing willingness to catamite practices at Eton. He has the chance of reverting to homosexual conformity, with the shy Margaret, is frustrated by his mother's disapproval of the liaison; he escapes, in self-pity and defiance, first to Mexico and finally to Australia, accepting his homosexual nature. His disolute father has had an illegitimate son by a prostitute, and it is the latter, improbably induced by his brother to run away to sea—who saves, when he comes upon Jamie, the flag of drink in the outback, to disport him, home in England, and claim the inheritance.

The author's final illustration, an elegant lacy type, with a cover and thumbpiece, a net which conforms to neither current Imperial standards. Angered, deals neatly and sensibly, subject which has puzzled many: "is Britannia metal?" The book is a silvery white alloy, approximately 10 per cent tin, 8 to 10 per cent antimony, sometimes a touch of copper and bismuth. It was first produced by James Watt of Sheffield in 1769. It was not, but spun or pressed, and was, philosophically not pewter. Some advice about cleaning comes, and the little book can be recommended as much for its clarity as for the clarity of its illustrations.

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Tichborne explained

ROBIN MAUGHAM *The Link*. 239pp. Heinemann, 30s.

Robin Maugham's sub-title, "A Victorian Mystery", defines his rather ambitious intentions in writing a novel based on the famous case of the Tichborne Claimant. The purpose of *The Link* is to provide the missing details which explain everything in a story which is carefully, indeed ingeniously, constructed to resemble the Tichborne case. The means he uses to do this are similar to those by which Victorian popular novelists traditionally adorned their denouements: the details of an estate and a fortune are decided by the intervention of a stranger whose connexion with the family is by a bar sinister. Add to this the familiar furniture of dissipated young bucks, loose parlourmaids, detached fathers and odd, sardonic family lawyers, and piece the whole narrative together (*Montenegro* is a series of first-person accounts by different characters, and you have a respectable bit of Victorian pastiche only modernized by the detailed (and masky) treatment of a homosexual theme.

Jamie Steede, heir to the Steede bank, talk with increasing willingness to catamite practices at Eton. He has the chance of reverting to homosexual conformity, with the shy Margaret, is frustrated by his mother's disapproval of the liaison; he escapes, in self-pity and defiance, first to Mexico and finally to Australia, accepting his homosexual nature. His disolute father has had an illegitimate son by a prostitute, and it is the latter, improbably induced by his brother to run away to sea—who saves, when he comes upon Jamie, the flag of drink in the outback, to disport him, home in England, and claim the inheritance.

Raw ham from Italy

MERIO BEVILACQUA *Califfa*. Translated by Harvey Ferguson. 280pp. Allen and Unwin, 30s.

It is a country where there is still, in the raw, a clear division between the respectable (at least officially) chaste and the unrespectable or, more accurately, the high drama can be made out of the "kept woman", the rich man's official mistress, openly installed in a smart district, openly paraded, whatever the day may feel about it. Califfa, oddly named because as a child she was the child or caliph of a gang of thieves, is poor, widowed, and desperate after the death of her only son. Beautiful, too, and in a hired car at the opera one evening, she catches the eye of Ambrose, the most powerful man in the town, dispenser of favours, buyer of souls, self-made tycoon who hates an aristocratic wife and despises his son. Instant infatuation turns to lasting affection and for a few months Califfa and her elderly lover know heights of passion and awareness they never reached before.

And then, as the city, its riches and gossip, Ambrose's power in business, politics and the church, doctor, stockbroker, tutor, accountant, confessor, his old friends she now tries to get with spectacular handouts of cash and property. An ambitious Califfa seeks to give a picture of two ways of life, Califfa's, but of an entire section of Italian society, from all the social levels from the poverty to world-weary bourgeoisie.

The cast is large, varied and busy: good and moral; violence, greed, and the rail-hole tenements; the old-style proletariat, with four to a bed. The urmalure of a miscegenous novel seems to be

Robin Maugham covers up the implausibilities in this tale with some skill: to make it seem even remotely possible as an explanation of the Tichborne obscurities is quite a feat. The whole enterprise is well-researched, with some care devoted to an authentic Victorian background and some pleasant moments of minor characterization to make up for the hollowiness of his central

figures. But the fabric of his tale never rises above the level of moderately accomplished mystery fiction; and these places, in particular, where our sympathies are supposed to be engaged by pregnant emotional conflicts and crises are done in relentless and repetitive cliché. The abundant opportunities for the treatment of Victorian class and moral attitudes are only rarely seized, in a novel which sacrifices insight for cleverness.

Small-town squares

RICHARD JONES *A Way Out*. 255pp. Macmillan, 35s.

Most of Mr. Jones's *A Way Out* takes place in Port Rydal, a substantial, staid Welsh town, where paintings and statues prompting the question "What's it supposed to be?" are frowned on, and musical idiom must do no outrage to the intonations of the *Alexandria*. Unlike most novels with such a setting, this one takes no account of Tm and Shoni and the boys *huh* from down the pit. Mr. Jones turns his coldly analytical eye on the top people, the Rotary belt, and in particular on the family of Arnold Griffith, Port Rydal's square, conformist, not ungenerous, town clerk.

Griffith and his square, ungenerous wife have two children: Janet, married to a brisk and blinkered solicitor, and Lew the drop-out, Lew, jobless after university, is in Paris cultivating his talent as a writer—so they hope, because letters from him are few and uninformative.

Then a letter comes casually inviting Janet and her Rover over to Paris. They accept. The town clerk and his wife are anxious to find out what sort of a mess their Lewis is making of his

life, and Janet fairly nice, fairly ordinary, goes out of simple pleasure at the thought of seeing her brother again. They find Lew shackled-up with a French-Canadian journalist with a husband across the Atlantic. Lew is ill, conscious of personal failure yet contemptuous of what others call success. All four return to Wales where Lew continues to court disapproval and even Cecil begins to tire of him. Would the rural North brace him up? A cottage is conveniently on offer, and Cecil is persuaded to stick with him. But Lew, separated from bourgeois falsities, still remains unconvinced. They take an excursion to an island, listen there to a diagnosis of the modern malaise from a resident television personality, and return to the mainland where Lew sits down on the sand and quietly dies.

The humiliation, in waiting for someone ambitions beyond his capacity are well staged in *A Way Out*. It is a subtle, satisfying book, developed with sureness of touch and having a purposive urgency which makes it exciting in spite of the deliberate flatness of its narrative method. (The French would classify it as a *roman à rebours* rather than as a *roman*.) Mr. Jones's hand is steady, his knife sharp, and his dissections clean.

there; but no interesting mind has been at work on it. *Califfa* was a dull book in the original; in this deadening, almost literal translation it is nearly unreadable.

Like a bad film with Anna Magnani in which hand-wringing and tears alternate with hair-tearing and shrieks, *Califfa* seems like a caricature of Italian life. The writing is lugubrious, and in English often sounds ludicrous. A kind of Dostoevskian intensity is attempted in all the characters, large or small, and the trap-pings of the "grand" novel are solemnly paraded: alas, with often absurd and always inadequate results. Truth, for one thing, is often sacrificed to effect: the big gesture, the powerful scene. For instance, Ambrose is shown in the confessional, pouring out the details of

a businessman's sin in which his confessor, a worldly monsignor, has to some extent shared. This is purest theatrical nonsense, an excuse to show up the interdependence of church and commerce when it comes to shady business deals; for Ambrose, having just taken on his new mistress, is in no position, let alone frame of mind, for religious repentance. So that both humanly and religiously the scene is phony. Califfa's rages and outbursts, in the same way, seem unprompted by anything but the need for a good scene. In other words, none of it matters because no one seems true. A slight novel can give a slight response of pleasure, something small but adequate for the occasion. A novel like this, which aims high, crashes hard when it fails.

Too many kookies?

GEORGE BAXT *"I" Said the Demon*. 178pp. Cape, 21s.

The anti-heroic couple who starred in George Baxt's last book make a comeback in *"I" Said the Demon*, assisted by an even kookier supporting cast than before. Max van Larsen and Sylvia Plotkin—different only in that they are so unrecognizably ordinary—have quarrelled over something much more fundamental than Sylvia's notorious chicken soup: they have become literary rivals; and the book, which involves an elusive judge and a quarrel of a million equally elusive dollars.

While van Larsen, and a dogged detective named Burton Lockwood, pursue the hoods and the loot along a thirty-five-year-old trail, Sylvia and her bizarre, colorful, surreal scene after

scene. There is Edna St Thomas Shelley, a publisher with hot pants; Gypsy Marie Rachmaninoff, down-and-out fortune-teller and her son Quasimodo the is a hunchback; and yes, he does swing from a bell-rope; Madame Vilma, gargantuan ex-street star of *Vas Zei Minn fur Der Glycerloch*! which is perhaps more familiar to you as *Alce in Wonderland*; and there is the Pied Piper, whose rapport with the neighborhood kids is a front for his sinister interest in the sisters Grace and Helen, who have spent thirty-six bitter years in hiding.

What with gypsy tribes bent on revenge, mask-concealed disfigurements, and crumbling churches, Mr. Baxt manages to inject a good deal of life into contemporary New York. It is strictly for laughs, though, and characters are never so thoroughly grotesque that they skip their quota of jokes.

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TLS

80th Year 27 NOVEMBER 1969 No. 3535

Editorial

If literary scholarship is most conspicuous in its assumption of tasks liable to exhaust or even exceed a lifetime, then the most conspicuous literary scholars must be the ones who are driven to edit a really copious correspondence. Once he is securely mounted the editor can easily find that he has allocated his energies in an expanding cause, since the more letters he publishes the more may well be flushed from their hiding-places, but as volume is added to scrupulous volume he should also find that the jockey's name comes to be more and more heroically associated with that of his horse.

Last year a number of these lonely long-distance men met at a confer-

ence arranged in France by the Société d'Histoire Littéraire. The live short speeches they made, and the discussion they led to, have now been published as a booklet: *Les Editions de correspondances* (Paris: Armand Colin, 76pp.), which makes a valuable introduction to the problems haunting editors and their recipes for solving them.

A common obsession, naturally, is with accuracy and a common complaint at the colloquium was the defectiveness of so many earlier editions of correspondences, themselves frequently derived from earlier editions still with the consequent perpetuation or multiplication of errors, such as the pernicious "amalgams" in which editors ran several letters together in the interests of concision. Contemporary editors have made their own lives both more adventurous and more arduous by their exacting requirements of authorial evidence for what they are printing, which may mean having to stalk autograph collectors through the salerooms in order to scoop the market for themselves.

A secondary question is how faithfully an editor need transcribe the autograph evidence once he has got it, and what his responsibilities are over wayward spelling and other calligraphic quirks to matter that has

been stylishly argued in the correspondence we have printed recently concerning editions of Samuel Johnson. No one at the colloquium defended the view of the out-and-out purists that an editor must not change a thing. Professor Fleckman was far from ashamed of his high-handedness in doctoring Voltaire's punctuation and accentuation, while one of two contributors from Cambridge, Professor Lloyd Austin, has changed upper-case letters to lower-case ones in defiance of Mallarmé's own eccentric usage. Once he starts to transcribe with total fidelity the editor must presumably wonder whether he should not be producing an actual facsimile edition of the correspondence, in which readability would have been sacrificed to the fetish of authenticity.

Where editors do seem to be uniformly strict is in including every item of correspondence, however trivial, in their editions. The argument here is that it is not for them to decide at any given moment what is and what isn't going to matter to scholarship in the future, and that a tiny event in one man's life might illuminate a larger one in someone else's when his correspondence comes to be annotated. All the same, it will be a relief for ordinary readers

to find that they can be treated as objects of little.

Yet unlike the aggressively austere volumes of left-wing ideology published by Suhrkamp and Fischer, for example, März's latest offerings are clad in glossy bright yellow covers with big red lettering: the standard of production, incidentally, is now extremely high. And one also cannot help wondering how far the pornographic elements serve to expand minds and how far they merely stimulate sales. It is true that März have given a certain area of the German literary and political avant-garde a more extensive and amiable outlet than it has had before. Whether this was worth doing is another matter: so far, at least, the German underground has been depressingly derivative. In the early 1920s German writers, not least Brecht, composed a mythology of America and the technological Utopia they then thought it heralded. All that the present generation has done is to crudely transplant elements from the American sub-culture—such as Coca-Cola, pin-ups, (*Flipperventil*), the Western—into a German context where they seem, not surprisingly, grotesque and inappropriate. And this cannot be shrugged off by labelling it "critique of consumer society." Apart from the lack of originality, any such preoccupation with America seems rather strange in view of New Left and A.P.O. attitudes to Vietnam.

März's list exemplifies the now characteristically German phenomenon of political: mental expansion—and physical transcendence—in the shape of translations of American underground authors; original German underground—"pop-porn"—works, by such members of the avant-garde "establishment" as Peter O. Christiewicz and Rolf Dieter Brinkmann; a somewhat pretentiously named "März Archiv"—to disinter forgotten or forbidden works; and, of course, a political list—up to a good start with works by Edgar Snow, David Horowitz, and LeRoi Jones.

More precise orientation about März's aims may be gained from *März: Texte I* (330pp., DM 12), the first number of "a kind of book-periodical" which will appear at least twice a year and is intended to act as a forum for discussion and to reflect the firm's output by extracts from forthcoming publications. The "Statement" on the first page comes straight to the point:

The programme of the März Verlag is determined by publications which aim at the expansion of existing literary and political modes of consciousness. In this aim literature and politics are not separate but condition and complement one another.

We are of the opinion that books should be freed from any abstract political pretensions so that they can become objects of little.

to realize that many of the messages of an author's life can be passed by telephone—since, as Professor Lloyd Austin, satirically notes, contemporary writers are liable to conduct correspondence with publication.

What is there in all this, any case for the ordinary reader? If he wants to read George Trevelyan, must he grapple on his own with the likely thirty volumes of M. Georges Lubin's edition (five volumes of which were read here on April 17)? Such editions, by their editors' own confession, are not for reading but for consultation: they are the aids and exemplars of scholarship which the world needs, arranged, as the general custom now is, chronologically. What non-specialists insist on having from publishers, the partial editions of an edition, relieved of some of their editorial apparatus, and especially of what Roger Parry (the here calls "contrapuntal" appendices, where letters "to" included with the letters "from" Who knows, if more ever, between notable connoisseurs could be detached from these series editions in this way, there, even be a revival of the good novel, a form which surely had possibilities left in it at the time it was summarily superseded. For example, ever been not realistic rather than a conspiracy? There is drama to be seen in letters that are not intercepted or censored, and letters from well-known writers are fought over by autograph collectors and scholarly editors.

Duckworth books

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MATTHEW HODGKIN

It has been said that Swift's satire is sometimes more applicable to our century than to his; and this may well be true of *A New Voyage*, which seems to contain some prophetic allusions to the troubled state of the New World, and in particular of its Academy, as well as to our own in the nineteenth-century. The editor shares Swift's confidence that these travels "will wonderfully mend the world".

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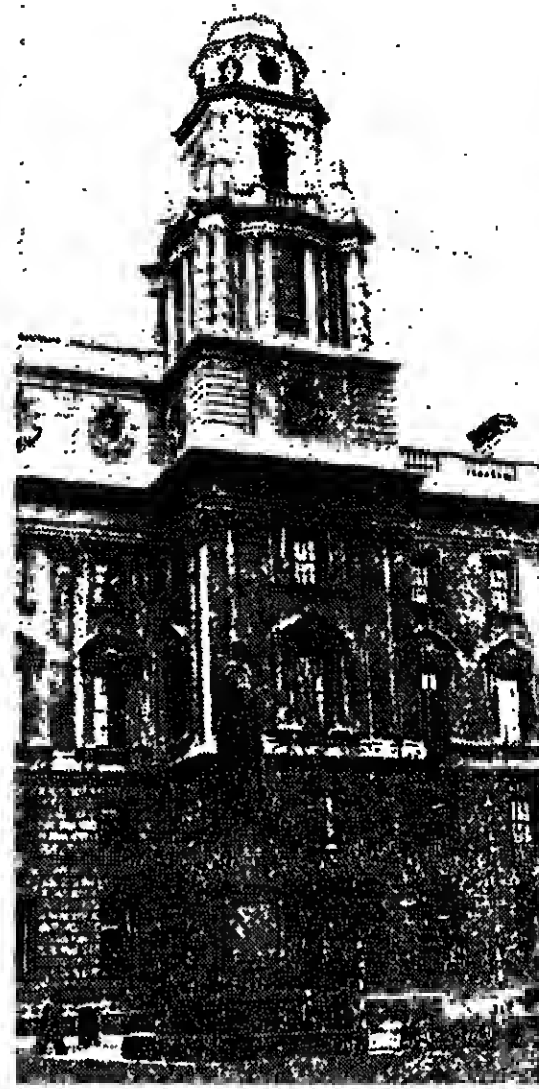
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Duckworth books

THE MANDARIN IN WHITEHALL

THREE STUDIES OF THE CIVIL SERVICE IN TRANSITION



with hardly a ripple of notice, the reform for which Charles Trevelyan laboured, intrigued with and stirred up the Dean of Exeter to write to Lord Russell, has disappeared. "All digested plan" as the *Servic Gazette* of 1904 put it "for throwing the shape of the country open to the conditions of men on the basis of a literary examination, and for just short of a 2, so much is implied in the sudden announcement by the Civil Service Commissioners that the discontinued examination since 1948 has come to be 'Method 1'."

Long before Lord Fulton's report, moreover, promotion from other grades of the Civil Service accounted for a very large proportion of the administrative class to which the "mandarin" tag has been attached. Dr. Fry's figures show that in 1966 40 per cent of the administrative class were not direct entrants and that something like a quarter were not known to be graduates. Allowing for the alternative method of direct entry by competitive interview (the so-called "country house") which has now lasted for twenty years, those who entered by academic examination and are still serving must now be a distinct minority.

It nevertheless remains the case that in the Treasury the outstandingly able graduate has long predominated. And with the men of the Treasury comes another evocative word which colours the traditionally humdrum nomenclature of government departments with a golden glow and a vague aura of mystery. One of the great merits of Mr. Wright's study is that although it formally covers only twenty years of the "mid-Victorian Treasury", it demonstrates in "telling detail" the growth and origins of the Treasury-centred service which has lasted down to very recent times. Like so many concepts that have formed modern England, the idea of the Treasury is traced back to the Younger Pitt—in this case to the work of Sir George Hamilton, who became the official head of the Treasury (then described as the Assistant Secretary) in the year of Trafalgar, and held the post until

MAURICE WRIGHT: *Treasury Control of the Civil Service, 1854-1874*. 106pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £4.
GEOFFREY KINGDON FRY: *Statesmen in Disguise*. 479pp. Macmillan. £8.
EVELYN SHARP: *The Ministry of Housing and Local Government*. 253pp. Allen and Unwin. £2.

What is not so generally noted is that until the rapid expansion of the universities in the present decade Oxford, Cambridge, and London were the only universities in England with more than 5,000 students; and that the first two of these alone provided more than a quarter of the English university places.

Long before Lord Fulton's report, moreover, promotion from other grades of the Civil Service accounted for a very large proportion of the administrative class to which the "mandarin" tag has been attached. Dr. Fry's figures show that in 1966 40 per cent of the administrative class were not direct entrants and that something like a quarter were not known to be graduates. Allowing for the alternative method of direct entry by competitive interview (the so-called "country house") which has now lasted for twenty years, those who entered by academic examination and are still serving must now be a distinct minority.

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the Treasury is a superintending and directing not an executive Department. Harrison supported this by a constitutional doctrine which still holds good, that the Treasury were the custodians of all prerogative powers concerned with either revenue or expenditure.

Harrison seems to have originated the doctrine, but its achievement, and its effective combination with the idea of a service competitively recruited from graduates, was the work of other men, notably Sir George Hamilton, who was at the head of the Treasury from 1859 to 1870, and his predecessor, Sir Charles Trevelyan. Although Mr. Wright sees these two men with all their less pleasing qualities, they and their work are such as to make them the heroes of his book.

Hamilton was the first man to hold the office of Permanent Secretary to the Treasury—indeed he invented the title for himself—and the minute raising him from the status of "Assistant Secretary" to equality with the political Secretaries is, on a careful reading, a considerable tribute to his own gifts as an official. Between his day and the retirement of Sir Edward Bridges, who was the last man to combine full headship of the Treasury with headship of the Civil Service, there were thirteen holders of the office. By contrast there were twenty-nine holders of the office of Executive Chancery of the Exchequer following for men who held the office more than once; and as the work by Lady Sharp on the Ministry of Housing and Local Government shows, Chancellors lasted fairly long in office. In the Local Government field there were thirty-nine ministers, in the equivalent period.

Well might Hamilton write, when approaching retirement, to the incoming Chancellor, Robert Lowe: "The office of Permanent Secretary to the Treasury may be regarded as almost the keystone to the whole Civil Service. Whatever may be the abilities or powers or strength of a Government practically, their facilities and I might almost say their safety in administration will be found to depend to a very great extent upon the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury."

He has been proved right on numerous occasions since. Hamilton differed almost diametrically in style from Trevelyan. Trevelyan, who became head of the Treasury when its staff only thirty-three

was an impassioned administrator, a devourer of blue-books, a man for whom administrative reform was a crusade. He went so far, in defiance of the Chancellor himself, as to write letters to the press advocating his policy of competitive entry. Hamilton was altogether quieter and more self-effacing. His personal papers do not exist. He did not tug the levers of power, he eased them gently into gear. Such contrast in style was well suited to their respective contributions. Trevelyan destroyed the old system of patronage. Hamilton created the operational hub of the new service, and its official atmosphere.

But without Jowett, and what Jowett stood for, the efforts of Trevelyan and the skill of Hamilton would never have led to the creation of the homogeneous official class that has been characteristic of Britain since the later Victorian age, has weathered two world wars, and has worked out a pattern of administration which—with all its faults—is unparalleled in its adaptability, its freedom from graft, and its cohesiveness. For Jowett established as a maxim of higher education something which sounds platitudinous today but was wholly fresh when he enunciated it. His object as a teacher was to make his pupils think for themselves, not merely to teach them subjects. Having pitched upon this plan to use the university to produce intellectual adults, he naturally sought an outlet for the results. "I cannot conceive," he wrote in 1851, "a greater boon which would be conferred on the university than a share in the Indian appointments."

What was needed was "an answer to the dreary question which a college tutor so often hears: 'What line of the Staff I choose, with no calling to take orders and no taste for the Bar, and no connections that are able to put me forward in life?'"

Down to the end of the nineteenth century there were still high officials who had entered before competitive examination was imposed, and since the Second World War the alternative method of competitive interview has become increasingly important. Allowing fairly years to a career, there have been only two generations of "mandarins" in the full sense. A monument to the second of these generations is the New Whitehall series of departmental portraits, by former Permanent Secretaries, to which Lord Bridges contributed the volume on the Treasury and Lady Sharp provides the latest addition on the protean department which started as the Local Government Board and even in recent months has undergone another transformation. Lady Sharp has the distinction of being among the first women to enter the administrative class of the Civil Service, and the first to reach its highest rank.

What must strike one about this book—even given its strictly limited and utilitarian object of describing rather than commenting—is its professional quality of briskness. It conveys a professionalism which is at once deeply involved in the subject-matter, yet wholly detached from controversy. On housing, for instance, in paragraphs which are at once incisive, informative, and impartial, Lady Sharp deplores the absence of any systematic philosophy about the responsibility of the Government for housing: "Housing has been a political football, each major party outbidding the other in their declarations of what they would achieve if returned to power."

The diagnosis is fair and penetrating, but these are not the words of a quote the rather loaded title of Dr. Fry's book: "a statesman in disguise". They are, rather, those of a forceful and clear-headed administrator who had, over the years, to ensure that the show really did go on, but would have welcomed better plays. The tone is very different from Hamilton's, addressing a difficult Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1867 about Treasury reorganization: "I regarded the alterations I proposed as a whole, to effect greater efficiency and economy, but am unable to recommend them if only partially adopted."

The context of this steely minute, of course, is very different, since Hamilton is discussing what was essentially an organizational problem, on

T. S. Eliot

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